

Paul calls Line-Item Veto unconstitutional Says President's new authority violates constitutional separation of power FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, August 12, 1997, or after WASHINGTON, DC - "All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representative... every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the President... if he approve, he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his objections..." reads Article 1, Section 7 of the US Constitution.

"The Constitution is very clear in defining how the legislative process is to work, and the line-item veto is clearly a violation of that process," said US Representative Ron Paul (R-Surfside, Texas) upon news Monday of President Clinton's use the line-item veto, a power granted him during the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress.

"Congress acted completely improperly when giving this power to the presidency; Congress has the responsibility to craft legislation, not this president, not a Republican president, not any president."

Paul has long criticized the fervor for a line-item veto. The power allows a president to strike single lines or portions of law. If two-thirds of Congress does not object, the president's version of the law goes into effect.

"The direction this newly-created power takes us is 180-degrees off base; it is completely misguided and will further undermine the Constitution. The line-item veto consolidates too much power in the hands of the President, giving him unlimited power to re-craft legislation to his liking. The Constitution makes it clear that the president is only allowed to approve or disapprove entire pieces of legislation. The line-item veto opens the door for a president to do much more," said Paul.

"Under the Constitution, if the president doesn't like a portion of legislation, he has the ability to veto the entire measure and convince Members of Congress to remove or change the portion he found offensive. That is completely constitutional. The line-item veto is the kind of absolute power our founders sought to escape."

Dr. Paul voted against the spending portion of the 1998 budget recently passed by Congress because it increased expenditures, and continued funding for programs and operations not approved by the Constitution. He did vote in favor of the tax legislation because it is "a step in

the right direction."

The congressman said the line-item veto gives too much "political power" to the president, which will likely be used to increase spending and the size of government.

"The line-item veto gives a president a whole new way to pressure congressman and senators. It gives him the chance to lobby for his particular piece of legislation with the threat that if the member does not vote for what he wants, the president will line-item veto something important to that member," said Paul.

On April 15 Paul addressed the House to oppose the new presidential power, as the courts were considering a suit brought by several congressmen opposing the law. The Supreme Court ruled that the congressmen did not have "standing" to bring suit because the power had not yet been used. During the April speech Paul said, "Having been in the Congress prior to this term for several years, I had been lobbied on a few occasions by conservative presidents, and the only time they ever called was for me to vote for more spending, never less spending. So I see the line-item veto as something a president can use actually to enhance or increase spending, not to reduce spending, which is the intent."

Paul said the constitutionally created separation of powers is trampled by the line-item veto, a separation which has well-served the people of the United States.

"It's critical we maintain the constitutional separation of powers in order to preserve liberty, which is the purpose of the separation. The Constitution, and the arrangement of power in federal government, was designed deliberately, specifically and we must cherish it, or risk jeopardizing the very foundations of our nation."